

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 PARIS 15409 131144Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----095624 131145Z /41
R 131112Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1532

S E C R E T PARIS 15409

NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS 1
TAGS: PEPR, FR, GW
SUBJECT: FRENCH DISTRESS OVER OTRAG

REF: (A) STATE 114573 (NODIS), (B) STATE 121044
(EXDIS), (C) PARIS 9555 (NODIS)

1. ELYSEE INTERNATIONAL STAFF SOURCE, QUERIED
ALONG LINES REF A MAY 12, TELLS US THAT ELYSEE HAS
NOT RECENTLY REOPENED OTRAG ISSUE WITH FRG, ALTHOUGH
THERE WAS "POSSIBILITY" THAT GISCARD DISCUSSED
QUESTION WITH SCHMIDT IN TETE-A-TETE.
2. SOURCE CONTINUED, ON STRICT BACKGROUND BASIS,
THAT IN COURSE LAST THREE MONTHS OTRAG HAD ATTEMPTED
TO FORM SUBSIDIARY IN FRANCE, BUT HAD BEEN TURNED DOWN.
IN COURSE A CONVERSATION THAT CONNECTION, HEAD OF
OTRAG HAD INSISTED ON THE COMMERCIAL NATURE OF HIS
VENTURE - BUT, TO FRENCH AMAZEMENT, HAD VOLUNTEERED
THAT IF GERMAN GOVERNMENT WERE TO APPROACH OTRAG TO
USE ITS AFRICAN FACILITIES FOR OFFICIAL TESTS, FOR
EXAMPLE OF GERMAN CRUISE MISSILES, OTRAG MIGHT HAVE
NO CHOICE BUT TO AGREE. SOURCE SAID GOF RECOGNIZES
THE ESSENTIALLY COMMERCIAL AND NOT YET TOO SOPHIS-
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PAGE 02 PARIS 15409 131144Z

TICATED NATURE OF OTRAG'S CURRENT VENTURES. WHAT
CONTINUES TO WORRY THE ELYSEE AT HIGHEST LEVELS,
HOWEVER, IS PRECISELY OTRAG'S CAPACITY, WHICH THE
ABOVE-CITED CONVERSATION ILLUSTRATES, OF TRANS-
FORMING ITSELF QUICKLY INTO A COVER FOR POSSIBLE
OFFICIAL PROJECTS.

3. COMMENT: GIVEN ALREADY HIGH LEVEL OF FRENCH
SUSPICIONS, POSSIBILITY OF SECRET OTRAG LAUNCHES
IN ZAIRE DISCUSSED REF B AND PREVIOUS OBVIOUSLY
INTRODUCES NEW ELEMENTS WHICH CAN FURTHER AGGRAVATE
THESE CONCERNS.
HARTMAN

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

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